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ABSTRACT

This document describes a certificate given for English for Speakers of Other Languages in Australia. The course leading to the certificate has four levels, grouped into two stages. Each Stage represents one semester's full time study. The certificate has four core modules: oral skills covering listening and speaking, written skills covering reading and writing, Australian Systems and Culture covering major social systems and institutions, and approaches to learning covering learning responsibility in the learning process. The modules incorporate the six aspects of language competence: procedural, technical, personal, cooperative, systems and public communication. Learner progress is measured against a set of learning outcomes for each module. The assessment criteria for the learning outcomes have as their goals breaking down language, literacy, and learning skills into small units, guiding teachers as to the salient features of each macro-skill area at each level, informing teaching methodology and teachers' construction of assessment events, and providing learners with an explicit statement of what assessment events will measure. The Certificate reflects recent developments in both educational thinking in general and language and linguistic theory in particular. Support materials for assisting teachers in implementing the Certificate are being developed. The Certificate seeks to enhance the effectiveness of language and literacy teaching. (CK)

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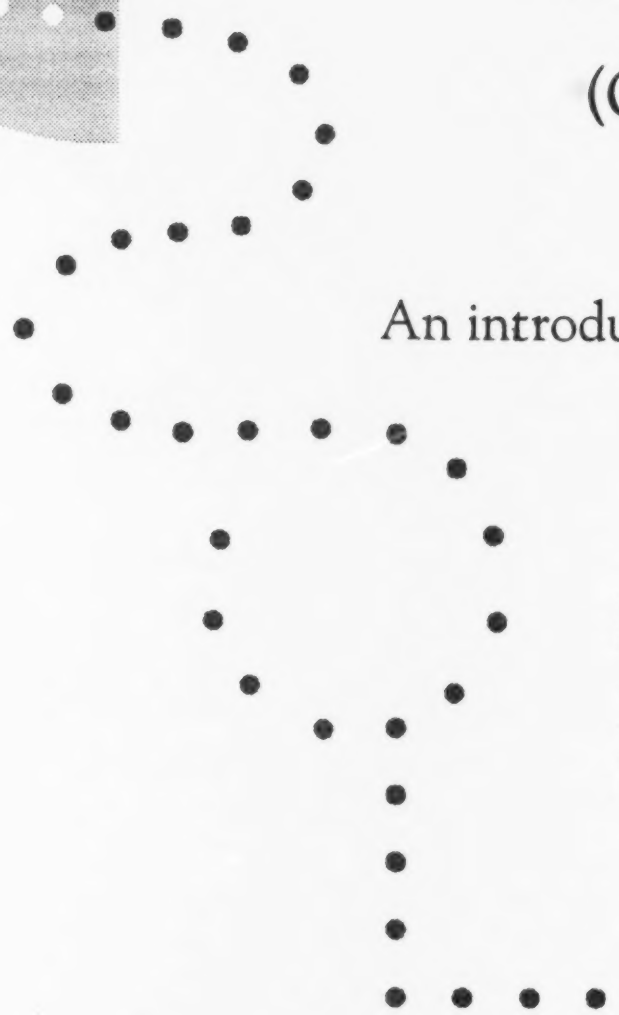
TAFE NSW

Certificate in English for Speakers of Other Languages

(CESOL)



An introduction and overview

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An overview of the new

TAFE Certificate in ESOL

What is the new Certificate in ESOL?

The new Certificate in ESOL 4955 replaces CESOL 8965. It offers a total of 720 hours of instruction at four levels, which have been grouped into two Stages. Each Stage represents one semester's full time study. The Certificate can also be offered part time.

The course allows for flexible entry and exit. Learners may be exempted from relevant modules to allow them to enter a level within the course appropriate to their current English language proficiency and their identified needs.

Learners who successfully complete Stage 2 will be awarded the Certificate. Those who successfully complete Stage 1 may be awarded a Statement of Attainment.

How is the Certificate constructed?

The Certificate has four core modules. These are:

1. **Oral Skills:** This module covers both receptive (listening) and productive (speaking) skills. It also has a strong focus on the development of listening strategies and strategies for negotiating meaning in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Attention is also given to the analysis of spoken texts to assist learners with the appropriate staging of spoken exchanges.

2 **Written Skills:** This module covers both receptive (reading) and productive (writing) skills. It has a strong focus on the development of active reading strategies as well as strategies to assist learners with writing. Attention is also given to the analysis of written texts to assist learners with the appropriate layout, staging and language features of written material.

3 **Australian Systems and Culture:** This module aims to provide learners with a secure knowledge about how major social systems and institutions impinge upon the lives of Australian residents and citizens. Particular attention is given to the contexts of education and training, employment and community life as contexts of major interest to adult learners.

4 **Approaches to Learning:** This module aims to develop learner responsibility for all aspects of the learning process. These include identifying what needs to be learned, planning to learn, organising time and resources, developing active and interactive

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learning strategies, monitoring and evaluating progress towards learning goals. It also emphasises the development of a critical orientation towards information contained in spoken, written and visual text as an integral part of learning.

This module is not a study skills course although study skills are touched upon at Levels 3 and 4.

Modules 1 and 2 represent the four traditional macro-skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). The inclusion of Modules 3 and 4 reflects a commitment to equipping adult learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to function in the wider social contexts into which they will move. It also acknowledges the close connection between a culture and the language of that culture, and sees knowledge of cultural and linguistic appropriacy as intimately related to one another.

Each module has a nominal duration of 45 hours at Levels 1, 2 and 3, giving a total of 180 hours per level. At Level 4, this figure is slightly altered by the inclusion of a compulsory 8 hour module in Multicultural Education. All modules are equally weighted and learners must achieve a pass in each module before progressing to the next level.

How does the Certificate relate to national competency standards?

Currently there are no established national competency standards in this area. Educational outcomes for the Certificate have been informed by the the *National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence*, which has been endorsed by the Australian Committee on Training Curriculum (ACTRAC).

- The CESOL modules incorporate the six **aspects** of language competence:
  - procedural communication for performing tasks
  - technical communication for using technology
  - personal communication for expressing identity
  - cooperative communication for interacting in groups
  - systems communication for interacting in organisations
  - public communication for interacting with the wider community.

- The three **stages** of competence - with assistance, independently and in collaboration with others - are incorporated in the conditions under which teaching and learning are to take place within each module and the descriptions of assessment events.

- The **principles** of complexity and familiarity are built into the conditions and descriptions of assessment events.

- The four **phases of learning** will be reflected in the way teachers select and sequence material and activities in developing units of work.

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The educational outcomes of the Certificate have also been informed by:

- the Mayer Key Competencies:
  - collecting, analysing and organising ideas and information
  - expressing ideas and information
  - planning and organising activities
  - working with others and in teams
  - solving problems
  - cultural understanding

- the Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating Scale (ALSPR).

How will learner progress be measured?

Learner progress will be measured against a set of **learning outcomes** for each module. These learning outcomes are written in the competency-based format currently required for accreditation of courses both within and outside TAFE.

The learning outcomes are broad statements of learner competence. They do not specify the content of the teaching, for example, by topic area or text type.

Learning outcomes are graded across each of the four levels. This means that essentially the same learning outcome is being pursued at all four levels but to a differing degree of achievement. Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the Certificate emphasise the development of English language for immediate and emerging life needs and goals. At Level 4, learners may choose to further develop their skills in one of four focus areas:

- further study
- vocational education
- employment
- general.

An example of a learning outcome graded across the four levels is:

Learning Outcome 3 (Oral Skills)

Level 1	Develops beginning strategies for negotiating meaning
Level 2	Supplements strategies for negotiating meaning
Level 3	Consolidates strategies for negotiating meaning in a varietyof spoken contexts
Level 4	Selects and critically applies strategies for negotiating meaning in a variety of spoken contexts.

Each learning outcome at each level has its own set of **assessment criteria**. These assessment criteria are also written in competency-based format. They have a number of purposes including:

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- breaking down language, literacy and learning macro-skills into smaller identifiable skills units
- providing language and literacy teachers with guidance about the salient features of each macro-skill area at each level
- informing teaching methodology
- informing teachers' construction of assessment events
- providing learners with an explicit statement of what assessment events will measure.

Assessment criteria do not form checklists against which to assess, but serve to inform professional judgement of students' competence.

Each learning outcome also has a set of **conditions under which teaching and learning are to take place**. These conditions qualify the learning outcome and its assessment criteria by indicating the degree to which the learning outcome needs to be achieved. Conditions relate primarily to the degree of comprehensibility, the permissibility of errors in spelling, punctuation, layout or script, the familiarity and complexity of text types, tasks etc.

The conditions are also graded to require an increasing degree of learner performance across the four levels.

The conditions are followed by a set of **assessment methods**. These assessment methods state all permissible means of assessment for any particular learning outcome. Teachers must select one or a combination of the nominated methods when assessing their learners.

What are the assessment implications?

In acccordance with TAFE policy on assessment, holistic assessment should be used wherever possible. In accordance with nominated assessment methods, assessment events can be constructed to assess several learning outcomes from one or more modules concurrently.

Assessment is ongoing throughout the course. Failure in an assessment event has no bearing on a student's final result provided that competence is shown later in the course.

Assessment is on a pass/fail basis. Students are not graded.

How does assessment relate to the ASLPR?

ASLPR levels have been used to describe language proficiency at the point of entry into each level of the Certificate. The ASLPR is not used to describe exit levels of language proficiency. Students' language competence at the end of a course of study is demonstrated in terms of learning outcomes. These learning outcomes, while not deriving solely from the ASLPR, have been informed by ASLPR descriptors.

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What is the overall orientation of the Certificate?

The Certificate reflects recent developments in both educational thinking generally and language and linguistic theory in particular. For this reason the Certificate

- adopts a format consistent with the competency-based training approach (CBT) currently used in industry training and increasingly in the statement of curriculum outcomes by major educational providers e.g. TAFE, the Department of School Education, AMES
- endorses an approach which makes explicit to both teachers and learners what is to be taught and what is to be assessed
- attempts to measure language skills in use rather than general language proficiency
- attempts to enhance a broad range of learner skills and to promote the transfer of these skills to other life contexts
- adopts a sociocultural theory of language which sees language as a means of pursuing and achieving specific social purposes in culturally specific linguistic ways
- recognises the interconnection of language and culture and therefore of linguistic and cultural learning outcomes
- places a greater emphasis on the control of oral and written text types as one of the significant means of accessing a second language and culture
- places a greater emphasis on critical awareness as an outcome of language teaching.

Within sociolinguistic theory, the specific linguistic orientation of the Certificate is towards Systemic-Functional Grammar as developed by M.A.K. Halliday and his colleagues. This orientation includes the development of genre theory and necessitates teachers becoming familiar with current methodologies for the teaching of text types as part of their wider classroom methodology. Many teachers may require support to feel confident and competent using this approach. For this reason, a range of available support is listed below.

Colleges may wish to acquire a selection of background reading and practical materials to assist teachers who are unfamiliar with sociolinguistic theory and its practical classroom application. The Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP) offers an excellent range of readily accessible and practical materials for teachers at relatively low cost. These materials, including videos, are included in the resource lists in all Written Skills modules.

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What support materials will assist teachers in implementing the Certificate?

Support materials for teachers and course coordinators are currently being prepared. These will include:

- Extensive up-to-date resource lists providing teachers with background reading as well as practical teaching materials. These include readings in areas with which teachers may not be entirely familiar e.g. the teaching of text types. Where possible, videos have been recommended.

- Guidelines on assessment. These will assist teachers in the construction of assessment events and the assessment of performance.

- A teachers' handbook. This will contain:

  - examples of oral and written texts analysed for their linguistic content
  - an introduction to the teaching/learning cycle and an example of its application to a specific text type
  - examples of how a nominated topic area might be approached in a way which integrates learning outcomes from all four modules. These examples of good practice will be provided for all four levels of the Certificate.

- An implementation manual for course coordinators. This will contain information about course numbers, enrolment procedures, entry levels, coordination across courses, reporting etc.

- A list of courses for teachers wishing to upgrade their professional qualifications or to enhance their understanding of current issues and trends in language and literacy teaching. This list contains both full academic courses and shorter professional development courses.

- Professional development within TAFE, which will be provided in consultation with Institutes.

- Background reading for professional development sessions. These readings will provide an introduction to and overview of current developments informing the writing of the Certificate as well as focussing on practical teaching issues.

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What implications does the Certificate have for teaching methodology?

The Certificate does not demand major shifts in teaching methodology. Most ESOL teachers currently use communicative teaching methodology as the basis of their classroom instruction. Teachers also tend to follow a topic- or theme-related approach to the teaching of content. The new Certificate recognises the value of both communicative teaching methodology and a topic-based approach.

At the same time, the Certificate seeks to enhance the effectiveness of language and literacy teaching using the above approaches by incorporating three additional dimensions. These are:

i) a stronger focus on the major oral and written text types within topic areas
ii) a stronger orientation towards the development of literacy skills
iii) a stronger focus on the development of learning skills and critical literacy skills.

The Certificate aims to develop commensurate skills in all four modules concurrently. This calls for teaching practices which integrate learning outcomes from each module into every topic area.

While teachers will need to familiarise themselves with a text-based approach to language teaching and learning, communicative teaching methodology remains the core of language and literacy teaching activities, i.e. the means by which topic and text are filled out and given substance for the learners.

This course will be submitted for accreditation to the NSW TAFE Accreditation Council and VETAB in November, 1994.

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